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National Orchestra

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presents

THE NATIONAL ORCHESTRA

Leader: VINCENT ASPEY, M.B.E



Conductor: JOHN HOPKINS

Soloist: VINCENT ASPEY

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1962

CIVIC THEATRE, CHRISTCHURCH

4th Subscription Concert

16th Season



Greig Royle

JOHN HOPKINS

PROGRAMME

OVERTURE: THE THIEVING MAGPIE - - Rossini

DIVERSIONS FOR STRING ORCHESTRA - Douglas Lilburn

VIOLIN CONCERTO IN E MINOR - - Mendelssohn

Allegro molto appassionato

Andante

Allegro molto vivace

Soloist: VINCENT ASPEY

—INTERVAL—

SYMPHONY No. 39 IN E FLAT (K.543) - - Mozart

Adagio—Allegro

Andante

Minuet: Allegretto

Finale: Allegro

FRANCESCA DA RIMINI - - - Tchaikovsky



—Mannering and Donaldson.

VINCENT ASPEY has been the leader of the National Orchestra since its inception in 1947, and has won the highest praise from conductors of the orchestra. In the words of James Robertson, "No conductor could want a more talented violinist or a man of finer character . . ." In recognition of his services to music in New Zealand (he has been associated with the NZBC since 1936 as leading violinist), Vincent Aspey received the M.B.E. in 1958. He will leave New Zealand shortly to visit the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe on a grant from the Arts Advisory Council.

Programme Notes

OVERTURE: THE THIEVING MAGPIE - - Rossini

At 21, Rossini was the most talked-of composer in Italy. A serious opera, *Tancredi*, followed in two months by a comic opera, *L'Italiana in Algeri*, spread his fame far beyond the confines of Venice. In fact, within four years of its first introduction, *Tancredi* had circled half the globe. By the age of 37 Rossini had written 37 operas, and 34 of these had been produced within the space of 14 years—"not a bad record for a man who was regarded as institutionally one of the laziest of mankind". Rossini's greatest gift as a composer was his deft touch in writing sparkling, effervescent music. Frequently criticised for writing music with little more depth than a mere surface veneer, Rossini nevertheless was a master of opera buffa style. In the production of music that chuckles and sparkles in every bar, Rossini was incomparable. The *Thieving Magpie* overture is a miniature masterpiece of Rossini's art.

DIVERSIONS FOR STRING ORCHESTRA - Douglas Lilburn

Written in 1947 for the Boyd Neel Orchestra, *Diversions for String Orchestra* is some of Douglas Lilburn's most accomplished music. The work comprises five movements, music, as the composer says, "not to be taken too seriously". The first movement, *Vivace*, establishes the somewhat light-hearted character of the work with a theme whose springing rhythm suggests a strong vitality. *Diversion II* commences with an *Adagio* section whose ideas develop new patterns in a succeeding *Allegro*, the movement being rounded off with a return to its first tempo. *Diversion III* is a *Presto* with a brittle, energetic rhythm. The music becomes more lyrical and contemplative in *Diversion IV* with the main theme introduced by second violins accompanied by violas and pizzicato chords from the cellos. This movement becomes more rhapsodical before expanding into a broad recapitulation of the lyrical theme. The work ends with a brilliant fast movement.

O.J.

VIOLIN CONCERTO IN E MINOR, Op. 64 - Mendelssohn

Allegro molto appassionato

Andante

Allegro molto vivace

Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto was written in 1844, being completed by September at Bad Soden, near Frankfurt-on-Main.

During its composition, many letters passed between the composer and the famous violinist Ferdinand David, who advised Mendelssohn freely on several points. Indeed, some authorities state that David was, to a large extent, responsible for the cadenza as it now stands. The première took place, from manuscript, at Leipzig, in March the following year, with David as the soloist, and the conductor Niels W. Gade.

The work is cast in three movements, planned to proceed without pause. The solo violin announces the main subject of the first movement and develops it at length, following which the orchestra repeats this theme, while the violin indulges in brilliant passage work. The subsidiary theme is heard first, very softly, from clarinets and flutes, accompanied by a sustained pedal point from the soloist. The brilliant cadenza finishes with a series of arpeggios which dovetail very neatly into the restatement section.

The andante movement is based on two contrasted themes, the first of which, the famous singing melody, is balanced admirably by a somewhat agitated section.

The finale begins with a short introduction which leads into the dashing rondo. This movement—airy, graceful, polished, and sophisticated—is a typical example of Mendelssohn's exquisitely finished style of writing.

B.P.

Interval

SYMPHONY No. 39 IN E FLAT (K.543) - - Mozart

Adagio—Allegro

Andante

Minuet: Allegretto

Finale: Allegro

This was the first of the last three symphonies written by Mozart, all three composed within a space of eight weeks in 1788. In Vienna the Emperor had appointed him Court Composer in succession to Gluck, in order to prevent him accepting engage-

ments abroad, but the emoluments were a beggarly pittance and the duties so negligible that Mozart wrote: "Too much for what I do; too little for what I could do." His wife was ill; an infant daughter lived only six months; and Don Giovanni, which had been a success in Prague, was a failure in Vienna. Happiness seems to be the dominant mood of this symphony. It is scored for one flute, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, strings and tympani. It was a rarity to find both clarinets and oboes simultaneously available in an orchestra at that time, hence the absence of oboes. There is a majestic introduction, characterised by insistent rhythms and rushing scales. Any pathos induced by this elaborate opening is quickly swept away by the sunny allegro with its crisp, rhythmic figures. The slow movement begins with a march-like tune and is alternated with a contrasting melody. There is a vigorous minuet, contrasted with a beautiful idyllic melody in the trio. The finale begins with a buoyant and playful theme that is reminiscent of Haydn. It is a movement of exuberant gaiety which only towards the end has any darkening of mood.

C.G.

FRANCESCA DA RIMINI - - - - Tchaikovsky

Early in 1876 Tchaikovsky was contemplating composing an opera to a libretto on an episode from Dante's *Inferno* but he could not agree to the insistence of the librettist, Zvantsiev, that the opera should be written in the Wagnerian style. However, the subject interested him greatly and inspired him to write this symphonic poem, for which he retained a strong affection. He gave no detailed programme to the work but prefaced the score with a quotation from the Fifth Canto of the *Inferno*, in which Dante, coming into the second circle of Hell, witnesses the punishment of carnal sinners, who are tossed about ceaselessly in the dark air by the most furious winds. Amongst these, he meets Francesca of Rimini, who relates the story of her own fall from grace through reading with her lover the story of Lancelot.

It is not profitable to attempt to put an exact programme to the music but some aspects are clear. For instance, the awe-inspiring series of chords for the brass at the beginning, to which a stroke of the gong adds a weird touch, is presumably Tchaikovsky's impression of the nether regions. The music then acquires the increasing ferocity of the rising whirlwind in which the unhappy lovers are buffeted to and fro. A terrific climax is reached and the music subsides to an *andante cantabile* episode which may represent Francesca telling the story of her sorrows.

This section is rich and beautiful in scoring but as it ends there is a tremendous detonation and a downward sweeping octave passage suggesting, perhaps, the catastrophe which engulfed the lovers. The music then returns to a strenuous and agitated mood of the whirlwind.

PERSONNEL OF THE ORCHESTRA

Conductor: John Hopkins.

Leader: Vincent Aspey, M.B.E.

VIOLINS

Vincent Aspey, M.B.E.
Eric Lawson
Gordon English
Clare Galambos
Ritchie Hanna
May Hannan
Wilfred Jones
Erika Schorss
Margaret Sicely
Reginald Sutton
Ethel Wallace

Alex Lindsay, M.B.E.
Haydn Murray
Bonny Billing
Angela Connal
Loretto Cunningham
Colleen Doran
Leif Hansen
Elsa Jensen
Mauritz Monas
Audrey Whittington

VIOLAS

William McLean
Glynne Adams
Georgia Bamford
Henry Engel
Carol McKenzie
Jean Munro
Ngaio Parsons
Laurel Perkins

V. CELLOS

Farquhar Wilkinson
John Hyatt
Lars Johansen
Peter Langer
Valmai Moffett
Claude Tanner

CONTRABASS

John McNeilly
Harry Botham
William Barsby
Vladimir Latyschew
Adrian de Ruiter

FLUTES

Richard Giese
Cyril Ainsworth
Jack Harvie

PICCOLO

Jack Harvie

OBOES

Guy Henderson
Ronald Webb
Norman Booth

COR ANGLAIS

Norman Booth

CLARINETS

Frank Gurr
Alan Gold
Ronald Weatherburn

E FLAT CLARINET

Alan Gold

BASS CLARINET

Ronald Weatherburn

BASSOONS

Peter Musson
John Crockett
Robert Girvan
George Booth

CONTRA BASSOON

Robert Girvan

HORNS

Peter Glen
Raymond Few
Guy Gibbs
Robert Burch

TRUMPETS

Gordon Webb
Michael Gibbs
Lewisson Campbell

TROMBONES

John McIvor
Tom Shanahan
Neil Dixon

TUBA

Maurice Connors

TIMPANI

Hendrik Stigter

PERCUSSION

Edward Andrews
Norman Gadd

CELESTA

Laurel Perkins

HARP

Leslie Comer

PIANO

Loretto Cunningham

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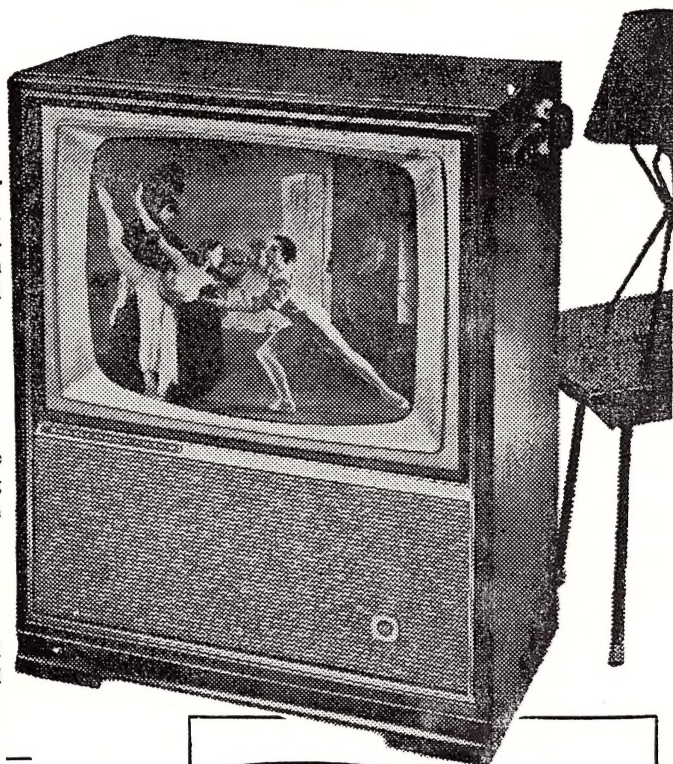
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